



**Remarks for U.S. Ambassador James Zumwalt
Opening of ‘Mango Week’
May 31, 2016**

(As prepared)

You Excellency Mr. Prime Minister

Ministers of ECOWAS, representatives of the Republics of Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana, Guinea, Mali, and Guinea Bissau

Distinguished Ministers

Distinguished representatives of the National Assembly and the Social Economic Council and Environmental

Distinguished director General of *Bureau Operationnel de Suivi (BOS)*,

Distinguished Director General of APIX

Distinguished Representatives of Technical and Financial Partners,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

It's a great pleasure for me to participate at the opening of ‘Mango Week,’ an important event organized by the Ministry of Commerce in partnership with USAID under the auspices of the U.S. Trade Africa initiative.

Less than a year ago, in July 2015, I had the privilege of signing with Minister of Trade Aliou Sarr a Partnership Agreement between the United States and Senegal as part of the Trade Africa initiative.

As you know Mr. Prime Minister, through this agreement our two countries are committed to the highest level of cooperation to promote trade and strengthen the business capacity of Senegalese state actors and the private sector to promote better trade policies and the more efficient integration of Senegal into international trade.

Trade Africa, the U.S. government's global trade initiative, puts a particular emphasis on coherent policies to promote regional trade as part of the integration process in the region and on the continent.

As part of our accord under Trade Africa, we agreed to to develop targets and set priorities to support regional integration through promotion of small and medium enterprises and the development of value chains with regional potential.

Senegal has since expressed its interest and commitment to the promotion and enhancement of the West African mango value chain under the auspices of Trade Africa.

The framework of this partnership provides us a chance to unleash the economic potential of a fruit renowned all over the world for its flavor.

However, Senegal and its fellow ECOWAS member countries may be considered too small to attract all the interest of international investors.

An enhanced, integrated regional ECOWAS market would be much more attractive to these investors.

To accomplish this, Senegal and its neighbors must overcome regional trade barriers and embrace new free trade protocols such as the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Plan.

Unleashing such great potential is the key goal of Trade Africa, implemented by USAID in collaboration with other U.S. agencies.

That's why we are helping to bring Senegal together with all its regional partners for Mango Week as we build a unified approach to cultivating and marketing the mango across West Africa.

We hope this week will provide a platform for exchange and dialogue among policymakers and private sector actors in the sub-region to discuss critical issues affecting access to markets as well as the competitiveness of Senegalese and West African mango markets.

Mango Week also provides a forum to establish a common understanding about ways a regional approach can be more effective to improve the competitiveness of the West African mango industry and facilitate its expanded integration into the global market.

Before I close, I would like to reiterate the commitment of the United States and USAID through the Trade Africa initiative to support programs that encourage intra-regional partnerships, improve West Africa's business climate, and promote global competitiveness.

I wish you great success in your proceedings this week, and many opportunities to taste the delicious West African mango that you will one day share with the whole world.

Thank you for your kind attention.